

beliefs beyond that which you must not and need not do.

Write a constitution for Maryland. Do not insult the people based on some decisions of the Supreme Court which do not require you to do them.

If you wish to go to the people and have this constitution adopted, give them at least some basis for believing that we have acted responsibly. No person's beliefs can be offended by having a complete and free option in this situation. Nobody acts under compulsion. There is no legal sanction. There is no personal sanction. There is no requirement of any kind in this situation.

I urge this Convention at least to leave this modicum for option for those people who still believe that there is a Superior Being.

THE PRESIDENT: Does any other delegate desire to speak in favor of the amendment?

Delegate Key.

DELEGATE KEY: Mr. President and other delegates.

I simply would like to say that I am insulted — and I am a religious person — that God has to be put in parenthesis. This is my objection. If there is to be an option, it should be the other way around.

THE PRESIDENT: Any further discussion? Are you ready for the question?

Delegate Rybczynski.

DELEGATE RYBCZYNSKI: Mr. President, by what happened out of my presence you afforded me a perfect opportunity at humor; however, I have no desire at humor, not so much because of the subject, but because of what happened here earlier.

I want to publicly say that as the son of an immigrant it grieves me to know that an immigrant would try to cut off debate knowing that the sponsor has not had an opportunity to speak.

Now, as to the case that Delegate MacDonald spoke of, please distinguish readily between that case and the facts here.

In that case each day a child was required to stand and either participate or stand out as a sore thumb. We are not talking about the same thing.

Now, in order to make certain that I would not take too much time, I prepared a statement which I would like to read at this time.

For a length of time now, stretching into centuries, our forefathers of this State of Maryland very grandly and mightily proclaimed a freedom to be religious and God-fearing, which freedom has served the people of this State well.

Some now want to corrupt this hallowed concept, to mean a State free of God, any mention of God, and any reference to God. This constitution is being molded through the efforts of all 142 delegates to this Convention by collective reasoning, argument and voting, and by the adoption of the preamble as proposed by a committee. This collective bargaining, reasoning and voting has proved overwhelmingly that this body does not, in fact, want to continue the tradition and show of respect.

On November 6 of this year, without great amounts of grand oratory or heated argument, and without the witticism attached to cutting and biting ridicule of honest effort, we spontaneously reflected our collective consciences by favorably adopting this provision which grants an option to an officer of this State to commence his oath and his term of office with a traditional oath, "In the presence of Almighty God."

We are a Convention of representatives meeting for the purpose of writing a living constitution for the people we represent. We are not a committee of lawbook publishing companies preparing an appendix for a text on State government.

To those of you who have pause about a contrary reaction from the courts, there is on your desk a precise statement indicating no such fear on the part of our research staff.

I strongly urge you to disregard the last paragraph of that memorandum, which obviously is a personal reference and not based on any law.

To those of you who voted against this provision because of the use of parenthesis to exercise the option and not the requirement, let me say first that the form of the amendment was forced on me by the knowledge that the statement must be optional to comply with the current thinking of the Supreme Court.

Let me suggest that at the time of the use of this clause, there will be no reference to such parentheses, but rather will read as one continuous sentence.

If this is in fact your only complaint in grammar and sentence structure, present us with the amendment necessary to cor-